

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

ACDA-19 RSR-01 NIC-01 AF-10 /121 W
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R 211433 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8852
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
USINT CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4924

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, IS, JO

SUBJ: DAYAN VISIT TO HEBRON

1. IN AN APPARENT ATTEMPT TO EASE TENSION BETWEEN JEWISH SETTLERS OF KIRYAT ARBA AND ARAB RESIDENTS OF KEBRON, DEFENSE MINISTER DAYAN HELD SEPARATE MEETINGS JUNE 20 WITH LOCAL NOTABLES LED BY HEBRON MAYOR JA' ABARI AND RESIDENTS OF KIRYAT ARBA. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS OF MEETINGS, DAYAN ASSURED NOTABLES THAT HEBRON WOULD CONTINUE TO EXIST IN ITS OWN RIGHT, APART FROM KIRYAT ARBA, STATED THAT GOI WOULD NOT OBJECT TO JORDANIAN LOANS FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, AND ENCOURAGED HEBRON TO IMPORT STEEL AND CEMENT FROM JORDAN IN ORDER TO EASE LOCAL SHORTAGES. PRESS STATES MEETING WITH NOTABLES WAS FRIENDLY IN TONE.

2. BY CONTRAST LATER MEETING WITH KIRYAT ARBA RESIDENTS DESCRIBED AS ARGUMENTATIVE. DAYAN REPORTEDLY ASSURED JEWISH RESIDENTS THAT HE SUPPORTED THEIR DEVELOPMENTAL AND RELIGIOUS NEEDS BUT WENT ON TO ADD THAT HE COULD NOT SEE PROMOTING THEIR NEEDS AT EXPENSE OF LOCAL ARAB POPULATION. ONE SETTLER REPORTEDLY DEMANDED THAT SURROUNDING
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LANDS BE EXPROPRIATED FOR EXPANSION OF KIRYAT ARBA TO WHICH DAYAN REPLIED THAT DEMAND HAD BEEN MADE " AS IF THOSE LANDS BELONGED TO NOBODY OR AS IF THERE WERE NO OTHER PEOPLE LIVING IN THE WEST BANK." IN RESPONSE TO DEMAND THAT JEWS BE ALLOWED TO PRAY IN ALL PARTS OF TOMB OF PATRIARCHS, DAYAN SAID HE WOULD NOT DEPRIVE MOSLEMS OF RIGHT TO USE THEIR PART OF SHRINE FOR RELIGIOUS SERVICES. JEWISH DEMANDS CONCERNING PRAYERS COULD BE MET WITHOUT OFFENDING LOCAL MOSLEM FEELINGS , HE SAID.

3. COMMENT: WHILE IT WOULD BE AN OVERSTATEMENT TO SAY THAT TENSION BETWEEN HEBRONITES AND KIRYAT ARBA RESIDENTS HAD REACHED SERIOUS PROPORTIONS, IT IS TRUE THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COMMUNITIES ARE NOT GOOD. HEBRONITES ARE WORRIED ABOUT ENCROACHMENTS ON THEIR COMMUNITY BY KIRYAT ARBA RESIDENTS, WORRIES WHICH LATTER HAVE DONE NOTHING TO OVERCOME AND IN SOME CASES HAVE EXACERBATED. WEST BANK MILITARY GOVERNMENT FINDS ITSELF CAUGHT IN MIDDLE BETWEEN NEED TO PRESERVE AMICABLE RELATIONS WITH HEBRON RESIDENTS ON ONE HAND AND SUPPORT BY SOME POLITICAL ELEMENTS WITHIN IRSEL FOR OCCASIONAL INFLAMMATORY DEMANDS OF KIRYAT ARBA SETTLERS ON OTHER HAND. DAYAN FINDS IT NECESSARY FROM TIME TO TIME TO TRY TO COOL THINGS DOWN, BUT IT DIFFICULT TO FORESEE ANY RESOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM.
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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 JUN 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973TELAV04924
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730624/aaaajjed.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11-Dec-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <04-Jan-2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> wfs 980217
Subject: DAYAN VISIT TO HEBRON
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, IS, JO
To: AMMAN
BEIRUT
CAIRO
JERUSALEM
NEA
SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005